




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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ADJOURNMENT

Local Government, Voting System

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.13 pm): I rise to inform the House of the Palaszczuk Labor government's plans to rig the voting system for Queensland local governments. Labor wants to take the 'local' out of local government. Driving, or should I say imposing, these reforms is the minister who could not get the trains to run on time, leading to 'rail fail', which continues today. The same minister presided over a grass-growing saga at one of Brisbane's premier race tracks. The minister has not released the KPMG review of grants so local governments can scrutinise these recommendations. Under this minister's watch, mayors and councillors were sacked by press release before the legislation was actually in place. This Labor government waited for two Labor mayors to be in the watch house before taking action to remove a well-known recalcitrant Labor council. Finally, the minister took three attempts to sack the government's Labor mates at Ipswich. Maybe his heart was not in it.

At this time, we see that local councils are working hard implementing integrity reforms. This Labor government is now overreaching with proposals to change the local government voting system. The Crime and Corruption Commission's Belcarra report did not recommend a change to the local government voting system, and the Soorley review recommended that the current system be retained until at least after the 2020 elections.

This minister talks of genuine consultation. It is more like an imposition of Labor's will. This Labor government's attempt to change councils' voting system under the guise of integrity reforms is not based on the recommendations from the integrity bodies. This Labor government has walked away from the partners in local government agreement. A survey undertaken by the LGAQ found that more than seven out of 10 Queenslanders are happy with the current local government voting system. Queenslanders will see this Labor proposal for what it is: an intrusion into the rights of every individual to complete their vote as they see fit.

There are many organisations that use the first-past-the-post and optional preferential voting, including the Queensland Teachers' Union, the Electrical Trades Union, the United Firefighters Union and a number of other unions. The Palaszczuk Labor government is happy for unions to have first-past-the-post and optional preferential voting but it is not good enough for local governments to have optional preferential voting. Why is it okay for OPV for unions and not for local government? This Palaszczuk Labor government has its priorities all wrong and only the LNP is committed to working constructively with Queensland local governments.